

"A magnifying glass," she said,
 "Is what we chiefly need,
 Scissors and knives will help to
 Dissect this lovely seed;
 I daresay some would think of it
 As nothing but a weed."

"But wait a bit," the students cried,
 "Before we look at that,
 For we have found a lovely bug,
 And it is very fat;
 We think it will become some day
 The moth called Kitten-cat."

"I weep for you," Miss Hodgson said;
 "It gives me dreadful pain
 To think that you are all devoid
 Of any sort of brain.
 I've told you once that creature's name,
 And wont do so again;

"I've told it you so often that
 You really should not doubt."
 The students they said nothing but
 "The potentilla's out;
 And here's a little weevil,
 With a long protruding snout."

"Oh, students!" then Miss Hodgson said,
 "We've had a pleasant poke,
 Shall we be turning back again?"
 The students never spoke—
 And that was hardly odd, because
 They'd found the flower of oak.

L. M. G.

THE CHILD AS A BARBARIAN.

WE hear much in these days of "Evolution." The word is on every man's lips, or it finds some application in every idea or in every fact presented to our consciousness. We have an old proverb, "The child is father to the man," and it is our especial province to assist this evolution of the man from the child, and as our doctrine of habit teaches us that we inherit so largely from our past selves, it behoves us to guard the child from "undue influence" in making the testament of his childhood, and yet to see that he does not in youth leave for himself a legacy of tares and thorns.

It has been stated by those who have studied the condition of humanity before birth that the child goes through every step of the physical evolution of which we find traces in the remains of early man, but in which there are still so many missing links. Undoubtedly there is some progress from a lower to a higher stage of development, as the occasional advent of a "freak" testifies. In the spiritual and mental life we can have, however, no doubt that such a process does take place, and that the dormant germs, the vast latent possibilities of childhood, do or do not, as the case may be, find fulfilment in the man.

We moreover believe that education is not confined to the individual, and that whereas the educational thought of the world has progressed but slowly, and still retains some husks of former error, if we look to the history of the world we there see the divine pattern of education, the slow upbuilding of the human race from the primitive simplicity of Genesis to the civilised complexity of to-day.

Man, in the dawn of life, began then as a "noble savage," and there the child begins to-day—a fact which Rousseau with all his errors had the acumen to see. If we consider the ideal savage of to-day—still uncontaminated by fire-water and European clothes—we find one adjective alone which completely describes him, and that is "childlike." Let us then consider what some of their common characteristics may be.

The savage is renowned for the extraordinary development of his senses; his natural powers have been so trained that he hears the foe coming in the far distance, and that he sees the lances of an "Impi" flash on the distant mountain side. Children also, where their natural powers have not been blunted, possess this quickness, as the sad story of Kaspar Hauser testifies; they only decay from lack of exercise when insufficient matter is brought beneath their observation, and when their elders' polite indifference discourages them from trying to hear, for example, the train coming before anybody else.

A child's sense of humour is also curiously like that of "the black people." Perhaps this is why the African slave figures as such a tender nurse and lovable companion in "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and the laughable tales of "Uncle Remus."

Their very phraseology reminds one of that delightful childlike expansion of the family which embraces all, and calls the doctor "Uncle Brown." But their "fairylike tricksiness" has a less agreeable side—the innate cruelty of the savage shows in the child who beheads his sister's doll and dislocates the long-suffering pussy cat's tail "for fun."

The childlike gaiety of the savage, his love of sunshine, have we not seen them a hundred times in the children? Their games and dances and tales come, though they know it not, through the mists of antiquity from dim origins of their race. "Puss in Boots" exists in the Sanscrit.

Those who have seen savage races, whether Soudanese, Hovas, or North American Indians, will see in them very much the same tastes as we find in the untrained children, the same passionate love for beads and feathers, of bright contrasting colours and loose sweeping draperies which are in no sense clothing, and the same fierce impatience against the latter, which the most civilised child will now and again exhibit in a joyous and rampageous escape from the bath, clad only in nature.

The habit, so prevalent among children, of crooning their thoughts to themselves as song, or of narrating facts over and over again in a sort of chant, recalls the battle songs of our far-off ancestors, the thanksgivings of the Bible—"A prey of divers colours of needlework, of divers colours of needlework, fit for the necks of them that take the spoil," and the old habit of general narrative in recitative which lingers among the savages, but has died out among us before the triumphant march of "The Press!"

The open-handed thoughtless trust and hospitality of the child would seem at first sight opposed to the supposed lack of that cardinal virtue among races who looked upon strangers chiefly as possible food. But yet beneath the surface of the child's heart there lurk wells of reticence or even of mistrust. A child would share its bun with a blind beggar cheerfully, and then in silence dream terrible nightmares in which the same beggar is for ever pursuing it. So the savage will often show an apparent openness and hospitality which those who know them best trust least. We know too well the list of our martyr-missionaries. The child among Christian influences is the victim of its own mistrust, whilst with the savage the die falls upon the object of suspicion.

There is a great likeness, moreover, to the savage "totem" worship, a kind of perversion of natural religion, in the idolatrous attachment children often manifest for some plaything, worthless in itself. Miss

Benson's pathetic story of the "Green Totem" has no doubt its parallel in all our experiences—the pouring forth upon some unresponsive doll or toy love meant for the Creator and those "made in His image."

If language is influenced by religion, so is it also by culture, and the baby before it can talk clicks and gurgles for all the world like a Hottentot holding mysterious converse in some common tongue with a baboon. Children at a further stage speak, however, with that beautiful simplicity and directness which characterises the dawn of each literature, and appertains only to its great masters afterwards.

It has been said that men begin to rise when they begin to create. The child begins to make, to practise the arts of peace, when it plaits two straws together, or builds a house of cards, rising, as the savage races have risen, by the realisation of their powers. Once this power of creation has developed the road is open—man has learnt that he can "do"—that the future need not exactly follow in the lines of the past; thus the Stone Age is followed by the Bronze Age, then comes the Iron Age, and now we are fast leaving the Age of Steam for the Age of Electricity. The triumphant march of civilisation goes on for one and all.

Yet there are many who decry civilisation and yearn for simplicity, who would have the child be "God's Fool." But by civilisation we do not mean the mere increase of luxuries, the use of soap, nor the spread of learning; it is the conception of the "civil idea," of the solidarity of the race, of men's possibilities and rights, of the choosing the higher and leaving the lower, of doing, learning all that may lead towards "the one far-off Divine event."

Let us, then, cast aside mere excrescences on civilisation—let the child be a noble savage, the child of the fields and woods, with simple tastes, merry laugh, and open heart, but lead them as God has led the world that they may be able to read its purpose and do His work with every power trained, rising on the foundations of primeval human nature, till they attain to what St. Paul means when he says, "And it doth not yet appear what we shall be."

And for us teachers let us follow in the vanguard of this true civilisation, saying, in humility and trust, with Longfellow—

"We are children still
Wayward and wistful; with one hand we cling
To the familiar things we call our own,
And with the other—resolute of will—
Grope in the dark for what the day will bring."

R. AMY PENNETHORNE.

Scale Howe,
Ambleside,
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